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This paper reviews the literature relating to small group counseling in the lower elementary-school setting, to help children improve human relations and adjust socially. Discussed are: (1) the importance of early childhood education, (2) the role of guidance in early education, (3) the use of groups in elementary school guidance, (4) group counseling and group therapy literature, (5) influences which determine the success of the counseling or therapy group, and (6) outcomes and benefits attained from group counseling and group therapy. The author also proposes a program of group counseling for the early primary grades. A comprehensive bibliography is included. (NS)

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SMALL GROUP COUNSELING: A POTENTIAL MEANS OF CONFRONTING ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN THE LOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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SMALL GROUP COUNSELING: A POTENTIAL MEANS OF CONFRONTING ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN THE LOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

John A. Yunker

I. Introduction

Historically the efforts and resources of men have often been directed toward eliminating the manifestations of problems rather than their root causes. An indignant segment of our population protests increased air pollution, yet fails to support proposals for rapid-transit facilities; business executives denounce crime in the streets while availing themselves of every tax loophole known to man; and "good citizens" humorously allude to corrupt politicians while neglecting to register to vote. This brand of public myopia is unfortunately not confined to the aforementioned issues. Education and, more specifically, guidance have also succumbed to numerous such delusive dispositions.

In 1960 a much needed National Defense Education Act was signed into law and, subsequently, large sums of federal funds were diverted to augment and improve our nation's educational programs. Among other tasks, this monumental work of law earmarked monies for the training and preparation of secondary school guidance counselors. Although one could not argue with the fact that counselors were needed in secondary schools, it did seem that the nation's sense of educational priorities was somewhat askew. Rather than concentrating on the etiology of student problems and working toward preventative guidance, the ultimate objective of this act was, in essence, to concentrate on the symptoms of such problems (i.e., school dropouts).

In 1964, as an extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, funds were finally reserved for the education and preparation of elementary school counselors. With the approval of that legislation it appeared that guidance would at last become a reality for students of all ages. Guidance workers were encouraged to plan and strive for truly continuous and developmental programs. This dream achieved fruition in some cases, but in others many proposed elementary counseling programs were indeed nothing more than old secondary-school paradigms which were being refitted for another run. It is a regrettable, but established fact that a number of these new elementary programs have accomplished little more than to attract additional federal funds into their school districts' coffers.

Despite the salient flaws in many such programs, the past two years have witnessed a markedly increased demand for elementary guidance services. Hence, due to the recency of this field it is patently important that the elementary counselor avoid the pitfalls which have, in the past, hampered his colleagues in secondary guidance. Quick and easy "remedies" for a program's growing pains should not be substituted for succinct, yet reasonably flexible goals. Furthermore, educators must forever remain acutely attuned and sensitive to the unique qualities and needs of all elementary school children. In order to comply with this demand a program must be designed that is congruent with the structure of the elementary school milieu. The author intends this paper to serve as a vehicle whereby he might closely scrutinize these exigencies and attempt to posit an approach equal to the nature of the problems confronting primary school children.

II. The Importance of Early Childhood Education

A. Academic Development in Early Years

One can fully recognize and comprehend the important need for primary school guidance by merely surveying the research and literature in the field of child development. Bloom (32:230) reports that

> there is an increasing level of determination in the individual's characteristics with increasing age and this is reflected both in the increased predictability of the characteristics and in the decreased amount of change in measurement of the characteristics from one point in time to another.

Bloom (32:127) also has declared that "approximately 50 per cent of general achievement at grade 12 (age 18) has been reached by the end of grade three (age 9)." Furthermore Dr. Bloom (32:177) has revealed that at a mean age of nearly two "...at least one-third of the variance at adolescence in intellectual interests, dependency, and aggression is predictable."

In essence, Bloom (32:218) is saying that changes in individual characteristics can be more easily facilitated if they are attempted earlier in one's development...," which is the period of most rapid growth." Once these developmental curves begin to level off the characteristics tend to remain more stable. Bloom (32:229) concludes that the initial five to seven years of one's life are probably the important years for the beginning of characteristics generally lauded as " desirable human qualities." Shaffer and Shoben (180:406) also cite the importance of early learning and add that

> much of later learning...involves a modification of adjustment patterns rather than the acquisition of new ones. For these reasons, childhood is a crucially formative period.

Hence, one's early environment and interrelationships tend to be of the utmost importance in establishing lasting behavioral characteristics.

Although Bloom's findings tend to bode rather ominously, in terms of a child's future growth in school, he does offer a ray of hope. Bloom (32:227) notes that

> ... although we are pessimistic about producing major changes in a characteristic after it has reached a high level of stability, we are optimistic about the possibilities of the individual being helped to learn ways of utilizing his characteristics in more effective ways, both for his own welfare and for more productive contributions to society.

This modification or assistance will of course be more assured of success if it is commenced early in a person's life and Bloom (32:227) believes that there "... are responsibilities for counseling and guiding the individual so as to enable him to lead a productive and satisfying life."

Robert J. Havinghurst, in his concern with developmental tasks, also stresses the importance of early guidance and educational experience. The ages three or four already mark a time when "the individual's self is effective in the defining and accomplishing of his developmental tasks." Havinghurst holds that there are certain times when an individual is ready to learn and

> ... if the task is not achieved at the proper time it will not be achieved well and failure in this task will cause partial or complete failure in the achievement of other tasks yet to come (100:3).

Developmental tasks, according to Havinghurst, can

> ... arise from physical maturation, from the pressure of cultural processes upon the individual, from the desires, aspirations, and values of the merging personality, and they arise in most cases from a combination of these factors acting together (100:4).

Edwards supports Havinghurst's beliefs and illustrates their importance by stating that

> if the critical period in learning hypothesis applies to human beings ... then the right experiences must come at the right time or the potential must remain forever unrealized (73:69).

Experience is also recognized to be important in child development by other scholars. Phillip Vernon asserts that by the time a child enters school his prior interaction experience between stimuli in the home and his inherent potentiality will "... determine his rate of progress for the next few years (206:489)."

Possessing this wealth of developmental information, educators must seize the initiative and employ this knowledge, both quickly and intelligently, in the primary grades where it can be most effective. Bruner strongly feels that "the more elementary a course and the younger its students, the more serious must be its pedagogical aim of forming the intellectual powers of those whom it serves (41:73)." Frerichs (82) cautions that certain identifiable characteristics common to potential dropouts can be observed even in the first grade. One can take cognizance from the preceding information, that not only time but quality is of the essence in early education.

B. Social and Emotional Aspects of Early Learning

In focusing our attention upon the intellectual growth of children, we must be cautious not to neglect the social and emotional aspects of the maturational process. Once again research yields rich information supporting the need for early education and intervention to combat the problems of young people. Biddle (19:44) writes that the personality of an individual is "... the result of the cumulative influence of every experience he has had." Sigmund Freud indicated that he found children easier to work with because their superegos were still incomplete and were dependent upon the vicissitudes of their interactions with parents and significant others. Finally Kagan and Moss in their developmental research indicate

> ... that many of the behaviors exhibited by the child during the period 6 to 10 years of age, and a few during the period 3 to 6, were moderately good predictors of theoretically related behaviors during early adulthood. Passive withdrawl from stressful situations, dependency on family, ease-of-anger

> arousal, involvement in intellectual mastery, social interaction anxiety, sex-role identification, and pattern of sexual behavior in adulthood were each related to reasonably analogous behavior dispositions during the early school years (114:265).

There are those, both within the field of education and the general public, who decry efforts by educators to assist children who are experiencing social adjustment problems. These critics are vociferous and find a sizeable amount of support among numerous groups within our society. Although their arguments often seem logical and are articulately phrased, they are based upon the spurious premise that "the sole purpose of education is to disseminate information." This argument defys reality because it challenges man's own nature. Campbell (45:289) has discerned that a child belongs to two influential worlds: that of his peers and that of adults. According to Woodworth (213:827), "social participation is not forced on the individual as a necessary means for satisfying other ends. It is rather a primary characteristic of his behavior." In keeping with this theme it has been said that ".. respect and liking and approval are necessary for human comfort (24:60)." Scholars such as Thelen (201:44), Kagan and Moss (114:272) and Havinghurst (100:31) have announced that one of the most important events and tasks during the years six and ten is learning to effectively relate to one's peer group.

From the preceding remarks it would seem both foolish and erroneous for a teacher to arbitrarily ignore peer influences upon the individual child. "Teachers and counselors must recognize their responsibilities for helping children acquire the social skills necessary for getting along with others and for becoming effective and participating members of the total group (116:42)." There is evidence to indicate that "young children's behavior is often inexplicable except as peer pressures are understood (93:50)." Peer influences not only influence a child's image of himself (212:480, 90:264, 188:595) but there is some data to indicate "that the child's peer group wields greater influence than do significant adults (45:315)." Research has also revealed that children who are referred to mental health clinics are those who experience some manner of difficulty in relating to others (180:491).

The antecedents of peer adjustment problems usually reside in a child's early history. Ausubel (8:36) believes that

> deep-seated personality defects rooted in the parent-child relationship influence many individuals to avoid interpersonal relations to varying degrees in preference to competing for status in the peer group.

Dr. Ausubel goes on to relate that the "peer group" is ill-prepared to satiate the needs that many young people bring to the school setting. It has also been confirmed that "emotional dependency accompanies (or precedes) inadequacy with peers (134:515)." One study has demonstrated that if a child is highly dependent upon adults in a pre school situation it is most likely that he will have "relatively low social status" and will therefore participate socially in a rather limited manner (149:363). However, there is also evidence to show that a home environment, which manifests a more democratic atmosphere, is inclined to stimulate a child in such a manner that he will participate and derive much satisfaction from peer interactions (15:61).

C. The Impact of Home and School Upon Early Childhood

1. Home and School Jointly Share a Child's Adjustment Problems

Althouth educators could conveniently deposit all of the blame for a child's social failures on the parents, no one can honestly or completely exculpate himself from this burden. Rather we must be cognizant of the societal condition which hamper or offer only meager support in enabling a child to make successful social adjustments. Jane Warters has observed that

> today young people do not find the wealth of opportunities provided by the earlier simpler society for acquiring social skills and understanding through the day-to-day processes of growing up (207:5).

The youth of today are most often not permitted to be viable and contributing members of our economic system and thus are, in a sense, alienated from participating in many basic familial processes. In some urban areas, the rapidly escalating crime rate seriously curtails the frequency of opportunities that children have for making social contacts or participating in extracurricular events. Opportunities for socialization are also sparse in some rural areas where children commute long distances to attend large and impersonal consolidated schools. Thus a logical corollary, resulting from these and other factors, is that today's children often live very lonely, very stultifying and extremely ungratifying lives.

2. School Programs Can Ease Transition From Home to School

In keeping with emotional and social development, a sizeable effort must be invested in the school orientation of children during the first crucial years. Erikson clearly emphasizes the importance of this transition by asserting that the child's first "entrance into life" must be school life (76:258). Erikson goes on to add that it is important that a child not be made to feel inferior when embarking upon his school career (76:260). Wrenn seems to agree with this idea and relates that

> the elementary school child early needs some appreciation of who he is and of what he is capable of doing. Unless this is accomplished, the motivation for making the fullest use of himself will die a-borning. It is in the elementary school that we have the early beginning of attitudes towards school and towards self which result in either steady growing or in an attitude of resentment and hostility which results in underachievement and early dropout (214:148).

Other writers such as Dinkmeyer (63:311), Van Hoose (205:16), and Gelatt (90:263) also feel strongly about the importance of early school adjustment for children. Furthermore Van Hoose believes that young people are attempting three major processes when they initially enter school. Basically:

1. they are attempting to find a masculine or feminine image;
2. they are developing an ideal and a conscience; and
3. they are moving toward their own mastery and away from the dependency of early childhood (204:16).

Mastering any one of these processes individually seems difficult enough, but school children are often forced to confront them simultaneously. Hence, we are left with little doubt why school can prove to be a traumatic experience for many neophytes.

A comprehensive school orientation has always been an important phase of the school program, but due to the distractions of today's complex and rapid pace of living, it would seem wise to devote increased attention to this initial step. Authors such as George Hill (104), Nicholas Anastaslow (4), and Van Hoose (205) have commented on the demands that a modern technological society places on its young people. Pressure for academic achievement commences early in their careers and students are forced to remain in school for an ever-increasing portion of their lives. One can easily perceive that if a child cannot smoothly adapt to the school milieu, long years of misery and discouragement lie ahead.

The 1960 White House Conference on Youth enumerated the following influences which might aid in more clearly illustrating the plight of young people.

1. Increasing mobility of the population with a definite trend toward an urban pattern of living. This mobility causes a large portion of the population to be confronted with situations where values and expectations are different from those they have known.
2. Both parents working, in many instances with limited opportunity for family interaction.
3. An increasing number of broken homes. Thirteen per cent of all youth under 18 in 1960 lacked the guidance of two parents because of broken homes caused by death, divorce, or dessertion.
4. Increasing pressures for higher achievement; pressures for youth to be directed into areas of study requiring skill in science and mathematics; and pressures for acceleration of students.
5. Social expectations formerly valued at more levels moved to the elementary school.
6. Possible effects of mass media upon boys and girls.

7. The explosion of knowledge, making it impossible for anyone to teach more than a fragment of the content of any field of learning (205:34-35).

In stark contrast to the preceding list of influences and demands we are reminded by Maslow that

> the average child in our society generally prefers a safe, orderly, predictable world, which he can count on, and in which unexpected, unmanageable or other dangerous things do not happen, and in which, in any case, he has all-powerful parents who protect and shield him from harm (141:378).

To further swell the child's growing list of burdens Slavson informs us that

> it is when the child is placed in school that he experiences the full impact of frustrations to basic drives for neuro-muscular and vaso-motor activity. Here he is required to use extensively and concertedly organs that are of not sufficient nature for such efforts. At the same time, the use of other organs when they are growing rapidly and even at a maximal rate is limited and prohibited (186:22).

Some children, in fact a majority of them, are able to miraculously suffer these influences with a minimum of discernable deleterious effects. However, Slavson (185:280) notes that as complex problems in the environment increase. their strain, some young people with less capability and tolerance (187:8) will be unable to withstand their pressure. It is at this juncture that the mental health worker is usually called upon to repair the damages. Needless to say, he once again is forced to ignore the problem's causes and confront only the symptoms due to excessive demands placed upon him.

VII. The Role of Guidance in Early Education

A. Must Display a Preventative Posture

What is needed in the elementary school is a type of "early warning system" which would work to effectively locate and assist both normal and emotionally troubled children in adjusting to and deriving full satisfaction from their school experiences. The teacher and the counselor together can work effectively toward this goal. Davis (59:2016) asserts that the teacher with training should develop a "procedure" which will work toward the modification of certain behavioral patterns in children which are not "...conducive to successful pursiut of work." Stennet lends support to this thesis by citing statistics which indicate that

> about 5 - 10 per cent of all children enrolled in elementary schools can be identified as having adjustive difficulties of sufficient severity to warrant professional attention (192:3).

Stennet proceeds to remark that "a significant number" of children who are identified as having emotional problems will ultimately need professional help in resolving their problems. Stennet obliterates the myth that chilren "grow out of their problems" by declaring that "the emotionally handicapped youngster tends to get progressively farther behind his peers in academic achievement as he moves over the elementary years (192:3-4)." As a result the teacher and counselor are forced to expend an inordinate amount of time and effort if they hope to effect any changes in the behavior of these students.

B. Must Utilize All Relevant Student Data

To be of substantial assistance to pupils in the elementary school the counselor and teacher must marshal and utilize all available data which is relevant to these children. In order for a counselor to understand a student he must thoroughly examine his situation in school (14:125), his home life and all other forces that are impinging upon his physical, social and psychological world. This is a very complex assignment for as Anna Freud (83:18) has said, "each child brings with him a collection of characteristics, and reacts to the behavior of the kindergarten teacher in his own precise fashion."

We have learned from research that children are living a style of life that has its roots in the home, community and playgroup environment (160:325, 91:37). Mead (145:47) describes how the child's personality is developed in relationship to "significant others" such as peers, parents and siblings. All of these factors are combined to make up a child's personality and "since the personality is at once a product and instrument of growth, the infant forshadows the child; the child the youth; the youth the man (91:30)."

C. Must Concern Itself With Student's Self-Image

One very noteworthy factor which has a substantial impact upon a child's personality is how that person perceives himself. Sarvis (175:308) asserts "that evil self-image is a common denominator in various learning problems of diverse etiology." She goes on to point out that the "fourth grade is a critical cutting point in terms of evil self-image because at this time:

> (1) basic skills supposedly have been acquired; (2) students are expected to begin to make major use of the ability to generalize information, draw inferences, etc.; and (3) the teachers can no longer set the classroom tone in the sense of gaining lebensraum for a child and preventing peer criticism or social isolation (175:310).

If this is the case, then "it is crucial that evil self-image be vigorously exposed and counteracted before remedial academic skills can be successfully introduced (175:310)."

One must remember when dealing with self-concept or self-image, that it does not take a child or his teacher (37) long to determine his position in the social structure of the classroom (94:223-224), especially in a more structured situation (178:172). It is also relevant to understand that the "... tendency to enhance the self is inversely related to the maladjustment, the more poorly adjusted the individual the more self-depreciative, relatively speaking, he appears (44:43)." Dodson (66:76) argues that the lack of self confidence can seriously limit and impair one's endeavors. A poor self-concept can also serve to make a child "... more anxious, less adjusted, and less effective in groups (63:311)." Finally Super adds that

> the insecure and unsocialized person enters the new group awkwardly, without the emotional support he hopes to find there and which the preoccupied group leader is unable to give him; he thus alienates the other members of the group instead of winning their support. Failing at the start, he soon drops out of the group... (197:501)."

D. Guidance Programs Should Contain Specific Aims

In discussing the work of the elementary school counselor, the author failed to clearly delineate his precise role and for good reasons. Each school situation is unique and no specific job outline would hold true for every educational setting. Nevertheless, there are some universal principles which should govern a counselor's performance regardless of his locale.

Perhaps the one outstanding principle that should be a characteristic of all counseling programs is the "... facilitation of human development (31:202)." There are any number of ways to aid student development, rangin from the introduction of new curricula to physical examinations. The counselor can and should play a role in all of these by participating as a member of the guidance team.

A second principle to consider is that "guidance in the school setting represents an attempt to help pupils make more adequate adjustments both as individuals and as learners (205:9)." The counselor must always be concerned with the student as an individual (166:8) for in this age of data processing and assembly-line education the individual is too often transgressed. Finally the counselor should be working toward helping a student cope with his environment, because in the words of Jerome Bruner (41:129), "psychological health is the difference between coping and defending."

E. Which Students are to Benefit From Guidance

One subject which seems to emerge whenever one discusses counseling embraces the type or types of students a guidance program should concern itself with. We know that in many guidance departments, the counselor is forced to confront student problems on a priority or "crisis oriented" basis. That is, the most saliently troubled students consume the bulk of the counselor's time. As a result of this procedure, many students with lesser difficulties never receive the assistance that they need and deserve. To them the counselor is only "that man who always takes Billy and Johnny to his office."

Currently some experts in the field of counselor education are attempting to rectify this state of affairs, but it also seems likely that this issue will continue to hinder guidance workers for some time. Consequently, while writers such as Kehas (116) work toward defining the place of guidance in the educational curriculum, the practicing elementary counselor will go on confronting the everyday demands of dealing with priorities. Although it is not within the province of this paper to posit an overall solution to this problem, the author will introduce some additional factors to exacerbate an already thorny issue.

Most counseling texts religiously pronounce that the counselor is to deal with "normal children" and that the emotionally disturbed students are to receive treatment from psychologists, psychiatrists, or child therapists. Yet, paradoxically, the "normal" school population contains a veritable spectrum of emotional conditions. Ryle (174:834) states that "... for each child referred to child-guidance clinics there are five equally disturbed not referred." Shepherd (182:47) has written that "a supposedly normal population can include children with behavior disturbances comparable to those of patients at a child guidance clinic." To further contribute to the counselor's dilemma, Buckle and Lebovici report that

> all children show signs of disturbed behavior at some time or another ... professional intervention is justified only if the disorder persists long enough to authorize a prognosis of lifelong disorder, or whether the disturbance is serious ... (42:87)

Ultimately the counselor, because of the "crisis" periods which emerge in day-to-day school situations, is forced to work with students which the textbook would not deem "normal."

This writer is not advocating that a counselor pose as a clinical psychologist. Rather, it is the sincere desire of the author that in the future counselors will be able to garner sufficient support so that they can indeed devote the bulk of their time to the entire student population rather than to a small minority. Perhaps at that historic juncture the counselor will be able to endeavor in earnest to see that "the best learning is achieved" (166:38) for all children by more closely recognizing individual interests. Nevertheless, until that day it seems logical that school counselors deserve a more candid and realistic statement regarding the "normal" student population which they are to serve.

IV. The Use of Groups in Elementary School Guidance

A. Man's Development Cannot be Extricated From the Group

Copious research data vividly reveal that some students need help in remedying adjustment problems, yet most schools have done little or nothing to alleviate or improve their circumstances. What seems to be required is the implementation of an effective elementary school program for the purpose of enabling all young people to better meet and cope with problems in the areas of human relations and social adjustment. Because all people, at one time or another, have the need for wise counsel on improving their human relationships, it is imperative that such programs eschew remedial trappings. Based upon this reasoning such programs would remain equally attractive to all students. The author believes that a program in small group counseling might best fulfill this demand.

The logic buttressing the aforementioned proposal is based on a number of beliefs. Initially Shaffer and Shoben (180:405) remind us that "... personality is learned from experience with other human beings." Trow, et al. (203:326) also note that one's attitudes "... have their anchorage in the groups to which he belongs." Proceeding still further Slavson writes that

> the destiny of man, savage or civilization, is irrevocably tied up with the group. His growth and development are conditionally the group's values and attitudes. In the healthy personality, group associations expand to include ever widening areas and larger numbers of persons. Where this does not occur, the personality is a defective one (184:1).

Consequently, because of a person's experience with group dynamics and his subsequent need for approval, it would seem reasonable to assume that a counselor might successfully utilize group interaction to assist a troubled party with adjustment difficulties. Research findings have indicated that a person's attitudes can be altered more quickly by a change in group "properties" than by attempts to explicitly instruct the student (230:327).

B. Groups are One of Three Current Trends in Guidance

A recent article (5:335) has emphasized that one of the three current trends in the field of guidance is the overwhelming surge in the number of counselors who are adopting group procedures. This marked increase in the use of groups in educational settings is analogous to the time period surrounding World War II when the use of group procedures was accelerated due to the dearth of psychiatrists needed to treat servicemen suffering from war-inflicted psychological wounds (164:159).

Because of the heightened demand for guidance services in education, Clancy reflects that

> ... exclusive reliance on the one-to-one model of rendering help is an impossible way of employing limited professional personnel for maximum utilization. Recent statistics show that there are only 21,152 guidance personnel in the United States to serve some 81,910 elementary schools and some 25,350 high schools (49:98).

Hewer (103:250) also reports that counselors are showing increased interest in group counseling because of the:

> (1) expansion of case loads; (2) lack of trained personnel; and (3) possibility that group counseling may be more effective than individual counseling.

Furthermore, counselor educators and teachers have both ranked "group counseling sessions" with students as "highly related" counselor functions in the elementary schools (35:3-6).

1. Groups Usually Exhibit Face Validity

Although group techniques manifest an attractive "surface" appeal, a counselor must guard against being overwhelmed by the almost "bandwagon" image that this trend has recently acquired. To accept group counseling on the basis of proven, superior qualities in certain situations makes lucid sense, but it is absurd to embrace it merely because it happens to be in vogue. Group counseling cannot and must not be legitimized on the sole grounds of economy (137:23). Furthermore, group counseling should not be looked upon as something superior to individual counseling. In reality these techniques compliment (109:147), but do not supplant each other (99:219).

2. Groups Have Certain Advantages

In the course of time, group counseling has attracted avid adherents and for completely valid reasons. Seeman reports that group counseling tends to supply the necessary conditions for ideal learning in that:

> it is a safe environment; it is an understanding environment; it is a caring environment; it is a participating environment; and it is an approving environment (179:343-344).

Shaw and Wurster state that group counseling sessions are currently being used to "... prevent problems from growing beyond the point where the individual requires special help to deal adequately with them (181:28)." Moreover, group counseling might supply a realistic and effective laboratory (185:290) for fulfilling the recommendations of Dollard and Miller, who feel that children should receive training in using "... their mental skill to solve emotional problems (67:202)." Regardless of the motives or reasons that precipitate the use of group counseling, the final decision must rest with the counselor (5:326). Hopefully, after diligent study and research, he will possess the knowledge and determination to approach this frontier with respect for both its inherent complexities and its promise.

3. Group Success Contingent Upon Leader's Expertise

According to Dr. Leo Goldman, "group methods of guidance and counseling seem to have experienced many failures, perhaps most notably in schools (96:518)." These failures probably resulted from numerous causes, but it is most likely that the principle etiology of group failure is the dearth of knowledge on the part of the leader. Frequently we hear the terms group counseling, group therapy and group guidance used interchangeably by allegedly trained personnel who should know better. Because such counselors command little more expertise than the average layman, their group ventures are destined to fail. The tragedy of these failures lies not only in the disruption of a group, but in the fact that these same counselors often tend to denigrate group techniques because of their foibles. Despite such frequent disclaimers, group techniques have proven their viability if the leader is trained to implement them properly. Thus, before the author commences a comparison of techniques and group compositions, he will attempt to separate and clarify the myriad of group titles currently being used in the fields of mental hygiene and education.

C. Differences Between Group Guidance, Group Counseling and Group Therapy

1. Group Guidance

At first glance, the task of clarifying and defining diverse group approaches does not seem to be unreasonable.

However, as one further delves into the existing literature, the inherent challenges offered by this assignment begin to gain prominence. Kagan asserts that there are two factors which have inspired confusion in the discussion of groups and they are, "the inappropriate use of inadequate labels and the failure to specify the nature of the treatment (115:274)." Also, one derives little satisfaction or assistance from many guidance texts due to their confused and often contradictory definitions (137:24). Mahler and Caldwell (137:24) believe that the final objective of group guidance, group therapy and group counseling are the same. Ultimately these three group approaches will serve "... to help youth obtain a deep understanding of themselves and better control over their lives." The writers continue by remarking that the primary ways in which to differentiate between the methods are "... through the technique used and the composition of the groups concerned."

Hewer (103:250) contrasts group guidance with group counseling by observing that the former is the more direct of the two techniques. Group guidance is often used primarily as a means of disseminating information in the school setting (93:270). However, group guidance differs from the regular classroom approach in that there is an "... atmosphere of freedom, security, acceptance and understanding so that the students will be free to be themselves...(207:284)." Bennett also asserts that there are four general purposes of group guidance and they are

> 1. To provide opportunity for learning, essential for self-direction with respect to educational, vocational, and personal-social aspects of life...
> a. To provide opportunity for the therapeutic effects of group procedures through
>   a. The perspectives gained from the study of common problems
>   b. The release of emotional tensions, increased insight into personality dynamics, and creative redirection of energy through group study of these common human problems in a permissive atmosphere
> 3. To Achieve some of the objectives of guidance more economically---and some more effectively--than would be possible in a completely individualized approach
> 4. To implement individual counseling and render it more effective through background study of common aspects of problems and the reduction or elimination of many emotional barriers to the discussion of unique aspects of common human problems.

Because students are permitted and encouraged to participate in the selection of group topics, many contemporary issues of shared concern are introduced during the meetings. Willey believes that group guidance should play a role in helping students discover "self-direction" through mutual cooperation. Furthermore, Willey declares that group guidance sessions can both augment a person's sensitivity toward others and afford "... therapeutic benefits for such children as the shy and submissive or the overaggressive and hostile (211:324." Anderson and Schmidt (6:56) perceive group guidance as a means of bringing teacher, counselor and student closer together through joint efforts. "These close relationships of mutual understanding and purpose provide....children genuine opportunities for growth (6:56)." Thus, exhibiting characteristics of both didactic and affective relationships, group guidance would ostensibly occupy a middle position between classroom teaching and group counseling.

2. Group Counseling

As in the case of group guidance, various writers and experts have attempted an accurate description of group counseling. While the definitions vary in scope and depth, the author has ascertained that there are select common components in nearly all of them. One of the most salient and omnipresent aspects to be located in these descriptions is the concept of security within the group milieu (22:97, 51:133, 117:353, 137:24, 152:160, 166:166). Implicit in these writings was the idea that since the individual is guaranteed safety within the group, he should feel sufficiently secure to "... experiment with change (152:160)." It is apparent that such a condition is an essential prerequisite to increased self-knowledge because

> all effective learning involves personal change and the most effective kinds of learning seem to be those in which the learner is the initiator of the change and involves himself in active commerce with the learning materials (88:76).

In the case of group counseling, the "learning materials" consist of human beings within a dynamic social setting.

A second recurring characteristic in these definitions involves the concept that group counseling is preventative (93:270) or developmental (166:166, 220:326) in nature. Peters, Shertzer and Van Hoose assume that because counseling is for students within the "normal range of adjustment," its emphasis will naturally be on "... development rather than cure (166:166)." David Zimpfer holds a similar view and asserts that group counseling should be concerned with such developmental tasks as "... aiding students in their vocational, educational, social and personal development and adjustment...(220:326)." As a consequence, group counseling can be viewed as concentrating on the prevention (93:270) rather than the remediation of student difficulties.

A third group counseling characteristic to emerge regularly is the idea that group members mutually assist each other when discussing their own problems (52:355-56, 69:22, 93:270, 117;353, 166:166). Many authors believe that as a result of such help each group member is enabled to derive more from the sessions because each will contribute knowledge and opinions. Such a setting, according to Peters, Shertizer and Van Hoose, provides for "... more adequate problem solving activities...." and the phenomenon of "collective judgement (166:167)." Cohn and Sniffen (51:133) assume that each person will gain the opportunity "... to help others discuss common feelings without losing their individual identity." Wright (216:552-53) also declares that it is beneficial for members to participate and be of mutual assistance. Some experts have revealed that cooperation and participation can definitely accelerate the helping relationship and in this sense, each member is acting as a counselor for the group (117:353).

Another consistent characteristic found in group counseling definitions concerns the homogeneity of the problems discussed (52:355-56, 86:681, 216:552-53). Some counselors prefer to work with a group in which all members have similar problems (216:552-53). Such workers have deduced that a common problem will help to link each member and thus will further insure group cohesiveness. The more cohesive a group is of course, the more secure the problem solving environment. By selecting pupils from the "normal" school population, it is believed that a homogeneity of problems or conerns will be guaranteed.

A fifth group counseling characteristic focuses upon group leadership. There is a general consensus among group-counseling authorities, that the group leader should be professionally trained in group work (52:356, 216:552-53). Also, it is agreed that the leader is to behave as part of the group and not as a separate entity (216:552-53). The counselor is to function as a catalyst to stimulate interaction, while carefully refraining from dominating the group (117:353). Kinnick (117:355) states that perhaps the counselor's control is primarily "... over himself, that is, he tries to keep his natural tendencies--to play the role of authority--from interfering too much with the developing group process." Essentially, these authors are stating that a leader who exercises the authority and control of a teacher in a group counseling session is tantamount to a counselor who disciplines a student who has referred himself for counseling. For a group leader to walk the fine line between control and dominance requires great patience, knowledge and expertise.

To characterize the preceeding discussion of group-counseling characteristics, the author would like to quote E. Wayne Wright's concept of "multiple" or group counseling.

> 1. All members of the group have a common problem.
> 2. All of the members identify with this common element which has real meaning for them.
> 3. The counselor functions as the leader of the group but does so from within the group.
> 4. A permissive atmosphere favors free expression.
> 5. Interaction and mutual help among members is essential, and members have the opportunity to evaluate pressures created by the group situation (215:350-56).

Since group counseling is fast becoming a most potent force within the field of guidance, it is important that counselors fully realize the advantages and disadvantages to be accrued from its employment. Initially Gazda, Duncan and Meadows (89:251) have made public certain advantages which they feel group counseling holds over individual counseling. They believe that group counseling:

> (1) approximates a real life situation and represents a community of peers through which each member can test reality, obtain feedback, understanding and acceptance of others...; (2) enables more clients to be seen at a given time and is then more economical and provides for better use of the counselor's time; (3) provides for mutual assistance, especially group support through the sharing of common interests, leading to problem solving for personal and social growth (89:251).

Wright (216:554) agrees that the above values can be found in group counseling and further contributes two additional advantages. He notes that through group interaction a counselor can identify students who might benefit from supplementary individual counseling. Furthermore, group counseling can serve to "... advertise the availability of counseling and prepare the individual for additional counseling." Cohn, et al, (52:257), assert that "inherent ...

in the group situation is the opportunity for an individual's protective withdrawal." Hence a child who is not yet prepared to verbalize certain aspects of his concerns can, with impunity, withdraw into the security of the group until the time seems more propitious for his contributions. Finally, Ohlsen (152:160) and Peters (166:166) join the others in reiterating that the preceding advantages can indeed be derived from group participation.

In contrast to the above disclosures, certain writers (166, 216, 89) have commented that the effectiveness of group counseling sessions can be curtailed by numerous disadvantages. These limitations include:

1. The inability of some students to relate to the common element or problem, thus never really to feel part of the group.
2. The need that some individuals have to identify with one person (presumably the counselor) than to be able to relate to or interact comfortably with a group of persons.
3. The probability that there is less warmth or closeness of relationship between the counselor and individual members.
4. A danger that the relative safety or anonymity of the group, and the expressions of other group members may lead some individuals to experience catharsis or disturbing insights too much or too rapidly to be adequately dealt with in that particular session (166:168).

Gazda, et al.(89:251), feel that another limitation results from the type of people who can benefit from group work. Group counseling is seen as being inappropriate "... for some problem-types; for example, "sociopathic of psychopathic children," and "the severely disturbed." This would definitely necessitate that a counselor exercise keen judgement in selecting group members.

3. Group Therapy

As in the case of other group activities, group therapy also suffers from disparate definitions. Margaret E. Bennett views group therapy as the "... most intensive form of group procedures (22:3)." Bennett goes on to add that

> the therapeutic and adjustive effects of this intensive group therapy for individuals with serious maladjustments may be different only in degree from those evidences of released tension and improved adjustment that can be observed in group study with individuals facing more usual adjustment problems (22:3).

Such educators as Peters, Shertzer and Van Hoose comment that "participants in group therapy usually exhibit emotional disturbances that incapacitate their educational progress (166:165)." These authors go on to pronounce that group therapy differs from group counseling in three ways. Therapy groups are concerned with more serious behavior, the topics are less structured and "... the leader is skilled and trained in psychotherapy (166:165)." Shaffer and Shoben believe that group psychotherapy adheres to the overall pattern of individual counseling or psychotherapeutic treatment "... except that one or more clinicians meet with two or more clients (180:540)." Baruch maintains a position analogous to those preceeding and articulates that in a group "... the therapeutic relationship is not on a one-to-one basis, but on a basis of manifold shifting inter-relationships (20:271)." Slavson (184:184) adds that "group therapy like all other types of mental treatment, seeks to reduce the inner stresses of which undesireable behavior is only a sympton." He further goes on to report that group therapy "... seeks to recondition the ego structure (184:184)." Through primary experience, Slavson has learned that

> the ability to withstand innumerable minor and major frustrations in life is essential for healthful living. Group life demands that we inhibit and control our behavior to conform to culture and to canalize it into acceptable and constructive effort (184:219).

a. Transference Phenomenon in Group Therapy

A question which often arises when one discusses group therapy pertains to the manner in which the phenomenon of transference can be handled or managed within a group milieu. This is of course an extremely germane query because "the expression of hostility toward the therapist in the transference relationship is a primary requirement in psychotherapy (183:21)." Many people honestly speculate whether it is possible for meaningful relationships to be established between the therapist and the various group participants. Slavson (184:137) reminds us that "the primary condition of psychotherapy is that the client must establish a positive relationship with the therapist." Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the therapist is handicapped by the number of clients in the group, he is also assisted by the group members themselves. "In groups the expression of hostile feelings is greatly facilitated because of the support patients give each other (184:21)." Sternbach (191:104) reports that both the positive and negative transference interactions are eased by other group members. Regardless of this factor, the assistance is not enough to help an individual negotiate a complete transference relationship (183:51).

Slavson, however, feels that "there are a number of people for whom this is not absolutely necessary even though it might be desireable (184:52)." Furthermore, shy and timid people may even achieve a transference relationship more quickly in a group setting than in a one-to-one environment because of the support received from others (184:21). It should also be observed that more "counter-transference response" is evident in the group situation due to the many conflicting values and beliefs (81:190). Thus the therapist must be especially cautious of his own values when working in a group situation (37:67), so as not to let the behavior of others distress him.

b. Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Therapy

Group therapy has realized wide acceptance and expanding support in the years since World War II. Mental health workers, who utilize this technique, realize that while it is not applicable in all cases, it does evidence many advantages over individual therapy for some people. Shaffer and Shoben have listed four general areas in which they feel that group therapy is superior to individual treatment. Initially they note that it is economical because it provides a vehicle for reaching greater numbers of individuals in need of help. They also have learned that during the therapy sessions "... clients can discuss similar problems." A third advantage is that many of the people in therapy "... are socially ineffective, then are placed in a situation where potential for interaction exists." These people seem to realize quicker benefits because of the group's social milieu. Finally they state that

> group therapy permits the individual participants to feel they belong; that they have membership in some group where they are valued. The sense of belonging makes individual behavior more meaningful and therefor heightens the motivation to improve individual adjustment (180:541).

Sternbach observes that group therapy helps the individual in treatment because it "... accelerates the regression as well as progression of treatment (191:112)." This is accomplished by forcing the client to yield to "... infantile desires and accept necessary emotional frustration" as well as sublimation (191:112). Sternbach also notes that a person derives valuable support and membership status from the group (191:112). Slavson (183:89) continues by saying that "reality testing is a major process in psychotherapy..." and certainly the reality of a social situation is more accessible in a group environment than in an individual relationship. Ginott also recognizes the important role that peer evaluation plays in group psychotherapy (92:4). Final, Joel and Shapiro (113:77) state that "... social reality testing..." is an integral part of the actual therapeutic session and is an important element of the therapeutic process from the beginning."

Upon further reviewing the literature and research the author located an article in which Super (197:504-05) listed certain common elements to be found in group psychotherapy. These elements were:

1. Freedom to discuss problems with sympathetic persons of similar problems.
2. Feeling of support from and oneness with others.
3. The clarification of feeling, whether as the result of reflection or of interpretation.
4. The development of insight, whether as the result of taking responsibility for working through one's feelings or of interpretation.
5. The feeling of ability to face life's problems which comes from having put them into words and achieved an understanding of both one's own feelings and of the attitudes of a number of other persons (197:504-505).

Bettleheim and Sylvester (28:685) also acknowledge certain persuasive factors which prevail in a group situation. Group influences permit an individual child to "experience safety," to consolidate his status, to acknowledge and integrate hostile tendencies, to integrate "... disparate tendencies...," to be able to face a traumatic past through strengthening the present, and to belong to the group as an equal member. In addition group therapy affords the therapist invaluable opportunities "... to observe a greater range of behavior and interaction within the therapeutic situation (129:154)."

Although group psychotherapy is of great use and effectiveness, it does, of course, display certain shortcomings. The disadvantages to be found in this method are important to both acknowledge and respect if one aspires to become a successful group therapist. Bettleheim and Sylvester affirm that a group can only exercise a therapeutic influence on an individual when "... group members have entered into interpersonal relationships with each other (28:684)." It is also known that some individuals do not possess sufficient ego-strength to hazard participation in a group situation and for them group psychotherapy is not a viable alternative. The limitation of the transference relationship has previously been alluded to and, of course, must be viewed as an additional disadvantage. Finally, Shaffer and Shoben (180:541) report that group psychotherapy is "... less effective in resolving strong personal conflicts."

4. Labels and Descriptions of Group Methods are Inadequate

Even though the author found the mental health literature replete with definitions of both group counseling and group therapy, some practioners deem these descriptions to be inadequate. Diamont, Todd and Robinson report that they have discovered most definitions of psychotherapy to be very ambiguous and hence, tend to "... raise serious doubts about the exclusion of counselors from treatment programs (62:110)." Cohn, et al., remark that Ohlsen and Proff "... consider group counseling and group psychotherapy to be synonomous, but prefer the term group counseling to apply to working with relatively normal people in a nonmedical setting (52:355)." In addition, Nicholas Hobbs contends that a thorough examination should be conducted to determine the

> ... possibility of giving special training to specially qualified teachers, personnel workers, ministers, and psychological technicians so that we may greatly increase the number of persons who are competent to offer therapy (107:171).

Finally, we are reminded that although the declared purposes of small groups may vary significantly. "... in general they tend toward helping youth understand their conflicting feelings and toward making them feel that adults, in at least one instance, care sufficiently to try to help them (137:63)."

a. Not All Experts Agree With Definitions

From the information documented in the preceeding paragraphs, it seems reasonable to conclude that not all mental health workers are in agreement as to the precise definition of group therapy. This dissension also provides the impetus for one to ponder the validity of certain occupational prescriptions usually placed on the school counselor. Counselor educators generally concur that guidance workers should not attempt to conduct group therapy sessions. As an alternative, these experts announce that the counselor may engage in group counseling sessions with members of the "normal" student population. However, Lifton paradoxically reveals that

> ... group therapy in an educational setting is here considered to be operating in any group where the emphasis is upon providing group members with opportunities to explore their own feelings and attitudes, rather than upon the imparting of information (130:156).

Thus, by virtue of the above definition, the school counselor is indeed engaging in group therapy whenever he conducts a group counseling session.

b. Differences and Similarities Often Semantical

Judging from the preceding remarks, it would appear that the debate concerning what constitutes group therapy and group counseling is partially exacerbated by semantics. The only apparent differences between the methods are that: the therapy group contains a more atypical segment of the population; and the therapist has more advanced psychological training. Some logical corollaries from the above conditions would be the augmented emphasis on remediation, the protracted existence of the group, and the increased level of affect. Nevertheless, analogous processes could be expected in a counseling group but to a more limited degree.

Because so many descriptions of group counseling and group therapy lack conciseness and precision, the author believes that the two methods share more resemblances than differences. Hence, in the ensuing pages of this project, the terms will be used jointly to depict how such group methods can be successfully employed in the elementary school milieu.

V. A Review of Group Counseling And Group Therapy Literature

A. Group Techniques Experienced Fortuitous Beginnings

The practice of employing group methods in the field of mental health witnessed its crude beginnings in Boston, where Dr. J. H. Pratt (107:532) attempted to orient tubercular patients in groups rather than individually. By amending the orientation procedure the Doctor hoped to reduce the patient waiting lists, which had grown extensive due to the dearth of medical personnel. During the course of the experiment, Dr. Pratt observed that his efforts were experiencing more extensive results than he had originally intended. As a consequence of this venture, Pratt learned that simple participation and interaction so stimulated the patients that rehabilitation assumed an almost competitive spirit, Moreover, the ramifications of such group participation were actually manifested in accelerated rates of recuperation on the part of numerous patients.

Although the value of group interaction was initially realized under fortuitous circumstances, group techniques have progressively earned increased acceptance and proven their worth in manifold ways since the days of Dr. Pratt. More specifically, group counseling and group therapy have gained heightened popularity in nearly all phases of mental health. Hulse (107:547) reflects on their positive contributions to mankind by noting that

> individuals successfully treated through group therapy learn to understand and to control prejudices and personal likes and dislikes and to use, in human relations, the unifying realities of the present instead of the dividing fantasies of the past.

Festinger (71:513) postulates that human interaction must be facilitated if man is to ever peacefully exist on this planet. In addition, Shaw and Wurster (181:28) assert that group counseling in the schools must assume a more preventative posture if students are to garner the skills necessary to meet and cope with life's problems.

For illustrative purposes, the author has elected to review several research endeavors which lucidly evidence the versatility and effectiveness of group counseling and group therapy. Hopefully, these studies will provide educators with additional insight and knowledge regarding the application of group methods. The author is fully cognizant that the situations and facilities depicted in these reports are not often, and sometimes never, present in typical school settings. Still, most of these projects contain valuable information from which professionals, in all facets of educa- and mental health, can benefit. Furthermore, Ohlsen and

DeWitt (153:335) remind us that while some of the research concentrates on atypical segments of the population it nevertheless "... does provide guides for working with students who have ordinary everyday problems."

B. Group Counseling and Group Therapy in Extra-Educational Settings

For a number of years children have received help in coping with their adjustment problems via small group counseling and therapy sessions. In most instances, however, these endeavors were discharged in extra-educational environments. It is interesting to note that the goals of some of these groups were not always therapeutic *per se*. As early as 1940, Altshuler (2:196) commented on the suitability of group psychotherapy sessions for diagnostic purposes. Altshuler further elaborated his beliefs by announcing that group psychotherapy yielded "... unlimited opportunities to study the individual patient in his impromptu reactions toward others and thus form a better idea of his conditions and problems." In later years Reisman and Lee (171:634) declared that a child's conduct in a group situation could "... provide invaluable assistance for interpreting a child's behavior to parents." Currently Churchill (48:582) has outlined how the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Center operates "diagnostic groups" for the expressed purpose of evaluating "... the problems of each member." Such groups usually consist of about six members of the same sex and meet for a total of four sessions. Churchill believes that the group itself is useful as a "... vehicle which provides observable experience." Despite the declared purpose of any group, however, it is important to remember that "the primary concern of the group worker is the individual within the group rather than the group itself."

Certain agencies have recently discovered that group counseling can be effective in helping foster children discuss and examine mutual problems and concerns. Watson and Boverman (209:70), working with preadolescents in small groups, report that the plight of foster children can "... be brought into sharp focus and reflected meaningfully through sharing in the groups." The authors also believe that such groups could further service the sponsoring agency by augmenting its perception of the children's true needs. Woodrow Carter (47:26) involved adolescent foster children in bi-weekly group counseling sessions and found that while this technique was definitely beneficial, it could by no means be construed as a device to save time. On the contrary, Carter discovered that while the group sessions were successful in candidly communicating the problems of foster children to the agency, they also succeeded in creating "... the need for more services (47:26)."

Children under residential care have long been involved with small group counseling and therapy as a regular part of their therapeutic treatment. Fineberg and Johnson (79:808) initiated a group program in a children's hospital because it was felt that those youngsters who were confined for prolonged periods of time lacked an "... adequate opportunity for aggressive experience and were not adequately stimulated for emotional growth (79:808)." The authors limited the group to preschool children and held one session weekly for a period of two hours. Each meeting was conducted in a playroom and the group worker allowed the children sufficient latitude so that they might interact in a vigorous and realistic manner.

Dr. Bruno Bettleheim has for many years utilized the influence of small groups to bolster the therapeutic atmosphere in the Orthogenic School. Bettleheim has learned that groups can only be effective in influencing a child when each member has "... entered into interpersonal relationships with each other (28:684)." Moreover, Bettleheim posits that genuine group coherence can cause the group attitudes at a given time to take precedence over the attitude of an individual (28:688). Dr. Bettleheim concludes his statement by observing that "... in a non-threatening milieu, children experience security because their need for predictable gratification within a consistent reference frame is unconditionally met (28:692)."

Finally, children residing in psychotherapeutic hospital wards have lent additional credence to the concept of the inherent value of human interaction. Researchers have discerned that certain deep anxieties emerge sooner in simple day-to-day life situations than in individual therapy sessions (193:312). Thus, in order to capitalize on the value of this interaction, groups of children were organized as an official part of the treatment program.

C. Group Counseling and Group Therapy in The Secondary Schools

In the past few years, the use of group counseling and group therapy in the public scholls has shown significant gains. Secondary school students have been involved in many group studies which have concentrated on topics ranging from underachievement to human relations. In fact, lately it was "... suggested that group counseling...may afford a means by which the school and the counselor can help culturally deprived students find and effect ways to deal with ..." their rather truncated identification with school and education (71:16). Hence, in the ensuing paragraphs, the author shall review numerous studies employing group methods which have been conducted within both secondary and elementary schools.

One ubiquitous question, which has inspired a number of research efforts since the inception of group work, deals with the effectiveness of group counseling as opposed to that of individual counseling. Keeping this question in mind, Froehlich (86:681) designed a study using "multiple counseling" techniques to work with high school seniors in groups of four to six members. Froehlich (86:681) outlined "multiple counseling" as "... a procedure in which a counselor works simultaneously with several counselees manifesting symptoms of at least one problem in common." The study used as a research criterion the difference between self-ratings and actual test scores. Froehlich concluded from this work that the actual data do "... not support the claim that counseling must be individual."

Another interest area of group-method's researchers concerns the effectiveness of group counseling in positively altering grade-point averages. Mezzano (147:224) conducted a project involving groups of low-motivated, male high school students.

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[illegible] weeks following the group [illegible] Mezzano found that [illegible] positive change in [illegible]" could be detected [illegible] when compared to no-treatment or groups. In contrast, however, Laxer et al. ([illegible]), working with problem students in the junior high schools found that group counseling did not effect an improvement in marks for any students involved in the study. Thus, the outcomes and results, the issue of academic improvement through group counseling remains both conflicting and tenuous.

Clement, Todd and Robinson (62) embarked upon a rather unique study focused upon determining the efficacy of using a school counselor to conduct group therapy sessions in a junior high setting. In the study

> ...the assumption was made that school counselors with particularly qualifying academic background, with a degree of judgment, a degree of insight, and a degree of emphatic capacity, with adequate supervision and training, may be able to perform the functions of the group therapist...(62:111).

The groups consisted of four to eight members and the trial program was conducted for two years. The explicit goal of the therapy "... was to decrease maladjustment of the group members..." through the improvement of personal relationships, self-concepts, and by bolstering "reality-testing (62:112). The results of this study "... tend to support the value of group therapy in the school setting (62:113)." Still another result was the revelation that "... counselors in the public schools, under certain conditions, can perform as psychotherapists dealing with conflicts of emotionally disturbed children (62:113)."

Additional studies conducted in secondary schools have revealed that groups can be effective in promoting: an increased valuing of self (39:170); an increased "... valuing of others...(21:749);" and an improvement in citizenship grades (46:122, 60:142-145). In addition Eilovsky and others have discovered that no significant differences exist between the effects of group counseling and individual counseling upon the development of realistic vocational objectives (34:365). Finally Zimpfer emphasizes "... that more accurate assessments of changes in the attitude of an individual may be made from his interactional behavior than from his self-report of progress (219:706)."

D. Group Counseling and Group Therapy in The Elementary School

Much of the group work sponsored in the elementary schools has been done within the past ten years. As in secondary education, the variety of research is wide and the results often debatable. Nevertheless, group counseling seems to be evidencing progress and the quality of the varied programs has shown improvement.

Gabrielson (87:32-34) reported on a project conducted in Montibello, California, for the purpose of helping emotionally disturbed boys and girls. Children falling into the above category were permited to volunteer for participation in small (i.e., five or six members) "activity group" for one hour per week. The groups were not to provide therapy, but rather to guarantee "... a corrective emotional experience within the school setting (87:32)." It was hoped that through these experiences, the children would be motivated to cultivate new interests in education and consequently commence to "... identify with school and teachers (87:32)." The author reported that these groups seemed to be successful in helping the children to release whatever had "... inhibited their constructive drive (87:34)." As a result the students were able to

> ...learn to use materials and deal with other children and an adult in the friendly atmosphere...where making mistakes, breaking things and being noisy, are not serious offenses (87:34).

Although the assemblages were termed "activity groups", they nevertheless incorporated many of the attributes and qualities of small counseling groups.

Stormer engaged in a group counseling project which studied seventy pupils in grades three through five who were defined by teachers as "... possible talented underachievers or dysfunctioning children (194:241)." Youngsters who displayed symptoms of social and emotional adjustment difficulties were given priority status for inclusion in the study. The selected students were then randomly placed in experimental or control groups. Time modules of forty-five minutes were reserved for weekly group counseling meetings. These groups were kept small and ranged in size from five to seven members. In addition, parents and teachers of the children met in separate weekly meetings (194:242). The findings of this project indicated that the experimental group did significantly benefit from group counseling. The results revealed that experimental group members "... felt less anxiety, were more selfreliant and less nervous, and saw their parents as accepting them more as they are (194:253)." These pupils also were "...less aggressive, had more of a feeling of belonging, and had better school relations (194:253)." Moreover, Stormer indicated that

> post-testing with a behavior and attitude inventory revealed a much healthier attitude and behavior around home, less conflict and anxiety, more responsibility taken and better intrafamily relations. In school there were shifts in a desired direction from both withdrawn and aggressive behaviors of students. There was also more participation in class, fewer disturbances, better classroom atmosphere, development of self-respect and confidence, and improved classroom work and study habits, there was also less fear of making mistakes and a tendency to be more flexible and open (194:253).

The literature devoted to group work is rife with studies concentrating on the predicament of underachievers. Ney (151:293) conducted a multiple counseling project and dealt specifically with under-achieving sixth-grade pupils. Ney limited group size to six to ten members and each group met for a total of twelve weekly sessions of forty minutes duration. Several outcomes of these meetings were that students: evidenced pride in group decisions; believed that they had a part in "... helping solve some common problems;" and appeared to be "... more settled in their class on days groups met (151:293).

Ohlsen and Gazda (154:78) attempted to work with underachieving fifth-grade pupils in groups of seven to eight members. Although the results were deemed disappointing by the authors, significant gains were realized in areas concerned with "... increased congruence between real and ideal self

(154:79)." Ohlsen and Gazda felt that two reasons for their discouraging results were that the sample was too small and the groups larger than optimum (i.e., five to six members) (154:81). The authors also remarked that fifth graders suffer from a paucity of "... independence and the adolescent repertoire of social skills to cope with life's problems (154:81)." Consequently, it is incumbent upon adults to seek additional responsibility in helping these youngsters to work through their developmental problems.

Cohn and Sniffen (51:133) sought "... to study the techniques of group counseling as it applies to eight seventh-grade boys who were underachieving and demonstrating acting-out behavior." The study lasted twenty weeks, with the boys meeting for two one hour sessions per week. During these meetings the pupils were encouraged to communicate their feelings in the group with impunity. The boys were also permitted to "... test reality..." and adopt unique formulas for confronting situations "... without fear of punishment from authority figures (51:133)." The group members were presented with opportunities to assist others with common problems and to contrast and evaluate their past behavior with their current actions so that they could "... make the decision for change in a more positive direction (51:133)." From these interactions certain group members were enabled to more accurately picture themselves. Some tended to become increasingly attuned to other member's feelings and others also learned to depend ".. less on physical aggression as a sign of physical worth ... (51:136-37)." As the group progressed it evolved its own form of self-discipline and the individual members became more positively allied with the values of school (51:136-37).

Gale Jensen concentrated on working with underachieving second, third and fourth grade students via group counseling techniques. Through group involvement with these children she hoped:

> 1. to discover social relationships operating in classrooms; and 2. to enable these students to acquire insight and understanding of the relationships so as to provide a chance to change them in such a way that the energies of the pupils can be re-directed into their class work (112:287).

Along with four one-hour group counseling sessions per week, each student also received four hours of special instruction weekly (112:287). The groups varied in size from four to six members, and the program was conducted for approximately sixty to eightly periods per year. Some positive individual results attributed to the study were: improvements in academic subjects by most students; increased interest in education; and improved interactions with their classmates. From the findings Jensen concluded that

> pupils whose progress is being affected by social relationship problems can be restored to adequate classroom performance within relatively short periods of time if the right counseling is given at the right time (112:290).

Group influence has also left its mark in the literature through studies not specifically focused on adjustment problems. Strickler ascertained that group counseling could be effective in improving the "... school and social attitudes among retarded readers (195:513)." Roland McCleary announced that small groups could aid isolated children by providing a psychotherapeutically oriented environment (136:353-51). Furthermore, Waterman, et al. (208:399) determined, while testing fourth graders for physical fitness, that children who were encouraged individually demonstrated less "camaraderie" than group motivated children. Students motivated as a group also displayed more confidence in their own ability and predicted higher scores than they could actually achieve.

The aforementioned research findings represent only a fraction of the work which has been completed using counseling and therapy groups. By surveying the literature, the author desired to accentuate the multifaceted employment of group techniques. While it is true that experiments describing group effects upon a person's attitude, behavior and perception have been inconclusive. Olmsted (159:68) affirms that most studies have revealed that individuals are more likely to receive positive stimulation in the presence of others than when alone. Hence, for this reason only, a counselor can ill-afford to ignore the potentiality of the group.

E. Group Counseling and Group Therapy Must Adapt to Meet the Needs of the Participants

In previous years, the bulk of research endeavors incorporating counseling and therapy groups have concentrated upon studying middle-elementary and secondary students as opposed to primary school children. Although a subtle default is evident in the area of research, Glanz (93:295) has clearly articulated that group counseling is a "... helping device for persons of all ages." While assertions such as the preceding may serve to buoy the aspirations of counselors contemplating the use of groups in elementary guidance, it is not sufficiently comprehensive for purposes of this paper. According to Merle M. Ohlsen, guidance workers should remember that

> though the same basic principles of counseling apply to all ages, the counselor must adapt his techniques to his clients social and emotional maturity, their previous experiences in groups, and the development of their communication skills (158:345).

Consequently, the author has found it necessary to precisely determine and select a group method uniquely suited to the needs of children in the five to seven year range.

1. The Use of Play Materials is Recommended for Groups Involving Primary School Children

While it has been inferred that group methods are perhaps superior to individual treatment when a child's problems are grounded in social adjustment (11:26); it has also been established that young children usually "... lack the verbal skills needed to participate in conversational psychotherapy (180:142)." In attempts to resolve this dilemma, many scholars have prescribed the presence of expressive play materials within the group counseling environment. Such a plan encourages a child to reveal his problems through his mode of play, which, like everything else in his life, has been "... influenced by what has gone before it (111:12)." Axline comments that "play therapy is based upon the fact that play is the child's natural medium of self-expression (11:9)." Byrne (43:223) adds that play materials have been used "... with elementary school pupils who generally are not able to deal adequately with their behavior by means of verbal symbols, or who cannot sit still long enough to try to talk about their behavior." Jackson and Todd (111:141) declare that "the child 'lives' through his toys, he feels through them, he uses them in their variety of meanings." Moreover, "the meaning of the child's play is determined not by what he does at any particular moment but by the whole setting, including his life story and family circumstances (111:53)." Thus, the group leader must be in possession of sufficient knowledge regarding each group participant and must be careful not to overgeneralize or overanalyze a child's symbolic acts (111:53). Furthermore, it is important to remember that the use of play materials in group counseling requires mastery rather than mysticism.

While Axline (11:55) confesses that it is desireable but not "... always necessary to have a playroom..." when conducting play sessions, it is apparent from the literature that criteria for the selection of play materials should never be compromised. Cowen and Cruickshank (55:294) observe that certain materials are superior for group usage and that the leader should be constantly alert to prohibit objects which might prove threatening to some participants. Helen Arthur notes that a wide variety of toys can prove debilitating because they often serve to distract a child from his fantasies (7:492). She goes on to advise that play materials should be of a type which aid in the elaboration of fantasies and unconscious feelings. Haim Ginott has listed five major standards for the selection and rejection of expressive materials. He feels that "... a treatment toy should:

> (1) facilitate the establishment of contact with children; (2) evoke and encourage catharsis; (3) aid in developing insight; (4) furnish opportunities for reality testing; and (5) provide media for sublimation (92:53).

Specifically, Axline offers some examples of materials which have been used with "... varying degrees of success." The list includes:

> nursing bottles; a doll family; a doll house; toy soldiers and army equipment; toy animals; play house materials; a large rag doll; puppets; crayons; clay; finger paints; sand; water; toy guns; peg-pounding sets; paper dolls; little cars; airplanes; a table; a toy telephone; a typewriter; small broom; drawing paper; old newspapers; inexpensive cutting paper; and pipe cleaners (11:55).

Axline concludes by remarking that play materials should be simple, durable and should encourage expressive play.

2. The Effects of Transference Upon Primary School Children

At an earlier juncture in this paper, the impact of the group upon the transference phenomenon was the subject of detailed inquiry. The research evidence and the literature clearly indicated that transference effects would be somewhat circumscribed due to the number of individuals within the group milieu. Upon closer examination, it appears that a group leader, when working with early-elementary school pupils, can virtually disregard the effects of transference neurosis. Anna Freud notes that the child is not "... ready to produce a new edition of its love-relationship because, as one might say, the old edition is not yet exhausted (84:34)." However, Freud goes on to indicate that children will interact with the group leader in a manner which clearly reflects their early familial influences.

3. Counselors Must Possess Accurate Knowledge of Each Group Member

Because a child is so buffeted and so dominated by the forces emanating from within the family, it is distinctly necessary for a counselor to explore the pressures converging on a child, both within and outside of the school setting. To gather the requisite data, it will be necessary for the group leader to consult with a child's parents. Conceivably, positive conferences of this nature could assist in augmenting the progress of groups through the mutual exchange of beneficial information.

4. Research Using Play Materials in Group Counseling and Group Therapy

To illustrate the versatility and effectiveness of expressive play within counseling and therapy groups, the author shall review several representative research studies within this area. Ruth Greenbee directed an experiment to determine how successful group play therapy could be in "... increasing the degree of social acceptance in a first-second grade classroom (98:1)." Greenbee used a total of 27 students and subsequently divided them into smaller groups of four to five members. The children were taken to a therapy room and allowed to engage in free play for nine to twelve half-hour sessions. From this study, Greenbee concluded that the "... degree of social acceptance in the classroom can be increased." Furthermore, she noted that the degree of social acceptance did not continue to increase after the termination of the project. Greenbee did indicate that group efforts can offer possibilities for augmenting the social system within the school environment.

Frances Koenig was involved in a study which offered group therapy to children experiencing personal problems which "... manifested themselves in delinquency, aggression, or withdrawal behavior (184:40)." Ten children from grades three through six were placed in a group which held hourly meetings weekly for a period of six months. The student's parents were also interviewed by the therapist and their cooperation was thus secured. The group sponsored frequent parties and used various play materials during the sessions. "All activities were of the permissive type and free to any who might wish to participate (184:42)." As a result of this project, behavioral changes in the children were noted in three major areas. The youngsters learned, via group sanctions, that certain types of behavior were not permissable. The children also learned to relate differently to their peers, teachers and the therapist. Finally, the pupils were found to be more free in their manner of self-expression (184:42). Koenig asserted that the project was ineffective for only one child. She also noted that "a longer period than six months is needed if the results are to be lasting (184:42)."

Claire Bloomberg (33:17) described an experiment in which a nursery school teacher, under the supervision of a clinical psychologist, worked with a group of five normal children who were unable to adjust to their regular school groups. After one month of the fall term had lapsed, the teacher officially identified children with adjustment difficulties and talked with the parents regarding small group assistance. Subsequently, a group of children was formed and met weekly for one hour. The group used play materials during the sessions, with crackers and juice also available on these occasions. The children were candidly informed as to why they were selected for the group and what occurences might transpire during the meetings (33:178). From this group effort, the participants learned that they were not alone in their problems and also encountered an adult "... who did not demand that their feelings be friendly at all times (133:180)." The authority figure in the group was rational and was concerned with exploring the root causes of their conduct.

5. Group Counseling Should Receive Increased Attention

Finally, the usage of play in group counseling and therapy has also proven successful: in helping slow learners modify their attitudes toward school (80); in accelerating the reading rate of retarded readers (30); and in effecting measurable alteration in the personal and social adjustment of participating children (132). Realizing that the foregoing experimental findings are neither revolutionary nor immutable, it would, nevertheless, be a gross injustice to permit this promising area of research to lie fallow. Although caution is always paramount when attempting to effect behavioral changes, the author believes that leisurely advances in the area of group counseling have deprived education of a valuable guidance approach. Surely a technique which offers as wide a variety of applications as does group counseling deserves a higher priority status than it has received in the past.

VI. Influences Which Determine the Success of the Counseling or Therapy Group

Eric Berne acknowledges two existing influences which determine the life of a group. These powers include "... disruptive forces from without and disorganizing forces from within (26:67)." Perhaps the latter represents the most significant threat in a school setting for it is contingent upon the counselor's adroitness in selecting group members. The author has encountered several factors which must be considered when introducing group counseling to a school environment. The list includes: mutuality of problems; compatibility of members; group size; age range; sex composition; length of sessions; duration of the group; physical environment; and the qualifications of the group leader. Because of their prominence, each of them shall be considered and discussed in detail in subsequent paragraphs.

A. Mutuality of the Member's Problems

There are several authors who insist that a group should be composed of individuals who are confronting mutual problems. Fleming and Snyder have said that for best therapeutic effects in a group the children "... should not vary too greatly in degree of intensity of maladjustment (80:116)." Warters (207:176) and Redl (169:248) caution that extreme differences in problems are undesireable in groups. Certain studies have revealed that a counseling group can fail or wax ineffective because of only one (92:29, 183:238) or two (39:169, 53:724-31) poorly placed members. Finally, Combs, et al. (54:13), Olmsted (159:22), Boy, et al. (38:8), and Wright (216:552-53) believe that all group members should share joint problems so as to better facilitate their identification with common elements in the group.

The above restrictions would seem to critically delimit the heterogeneity of a group. But, upon keener analysis, one perceives that most authors do, indeed, allow great latitude in the selection of members. Ohlsen and DeWitt (153:335) candidly announce that "no two individuals in a group would sense the same facets of a problem." Joel and Shapiro (113:79) feel that while members should share common problems, it is not necessary for them to have the same diagnoses. Therefore, despite the possibility that all members could possess nominally similar problems, a variety of differences and outlooks continue to prevail within the assemblage. Most group leaders generally recommend that a group consist of a wisely balanced mixture of members (166:176, 54:13, 18:239, 207:177). Furthermore, Ginott believes that "an optimal group arrangement calls for several quiet children and not more than two who are aggressive (92:32)."

B. Compatibility of Group Members

Should students who seem to be functioning in school without apparent difficulties be included in counseling groups? This question is often posed by counselors and has no singular solution. Durkin (72:596) and Ney believe "... that a group could profit from including a member or two who are well-adjusted... (15:293)." Hopefully, these individuals might provide improved internal leadership and thus relieve the counselor of the onerous task of maintaining order. Durkin (72:596) asserts that normal children can probably contribute to group success and will only be harmed if they have needs similar to those children evidencing bad "habits." Hobbs (106:177-78) adds that persons considered to be "near happy" are the ones who benefit through the group by helping themselves as well as others. "These are the people for whom group therapy seems ideally suited (106:178)." Thus, besides bringing order to the group, the more adjusted members could provide the behavioral models so desperately needed by the less socialized group members.

The author noticed that, despite some conflicting statements (79:609, 81, 186), the overwhelming majority of researchers respect and appreciate the value of carefully selecting members for counseling groups. The literature is replete with instructions thoroughly delineating the types of individuals who should or should not be included in counseling and therapy groups (52, 81, 92, 103, 106, 166, 177, 183, 184, 185). In view of this significant display of support, the school counselor would do well to exercise restraint and call upon a variety of resources before finalizing his selection of group participants.

Slavson (183:232-33) has qualified his statement that "... all children gain from group association," by monitoring that here are some children who are "inaccessible" to group treatment. According to Dr. Slavson, the ones who should be excluded from group therapy are specifically: "narcissitic children; sadistic children; children who seek punishment; actively homosexual children; orally aggressive children; homocidal children; and extremely aggressive children (184:112-18)." Similarly, Haim Ginott has compiled a list of children considered "unsuitable for group therapy (92:18)." The list includes: children who are products of acute sibling rivalries; children who have fallen into a habit of theft; children with advanced sexual drives; children who reveal socio-pathic tendencies (i.e., "all take and no give"); children who are extremely aggressive; children who have witnessed perverse sexual experiences; and children who have gone through gross stress reactions (i.e., "trauma child") (92:18-22). In addition, Hobbs and Ginott (92:32) would consider excluding "people who are continually in close contact with each other outside the group (166:312-15)." Van Hoose supports the latter statement and submits that children who are in close association due to classroom assignments should be provided with an "... opportunity for new group identification (205:60)."

Because the average school counselor works with a more typical population of students, he will not have cause to frequently concern himself with the aforementioned listings. Yet, certain children in representative school settings do indeed manifest some of the above symptoms and the counselor should remain observant when selecting group participants.

Just as there are some children who fail to benefit from group interaction, there are others who derive satisfaction and assistance from just such experiences. Slavson records that in order for an individual to benefit from group therapy he "... must have a minimal capacity for group participation or 'social hunger' (193:321)." Ginott has registered a number of characteristics displayed by children who could gain from therapy groups. Included in this category are children who tend to be: withdrawn; immature; evidencing phobic reactions; boys who appear effeminate; children possessing "pseudo assets" such as, obsequious adherence to all adult commands; children manifesting habit disorders (i.e., vandalism, fighting, etc.) (92:17). Finally, Merle M. Ohlsen (158:344) observes that children in need of group counseling are often: shy; having difficulty in classroom participation; without friends; and underachieving (158:344). Thus, a counselor, observing the above criteria and working in league with a child's parents and teachers, would seemingly encounter little difficulty in identifying group counseling candidates.

C. Size of Groups

While assessing the potentialities of group counseling within the elementary school framework, the counselor must remember to pay due respect to the question of group size. The number of members included in any group approach must vary according to group tasks and the maturity of the members (143). Too few or too many participants may well doom a group before it can emerge from the planning stage. Ginott (92:33) believes that any therapy group composed of primary school youngsters should include no more than five members. Mayer and Baker, after reviewing group studies, conclude that:

> ... group sizes of four to six rather than large groups, generally produce greater client freedom of expression, interaction, understanding of others, cohesiveness, satisfaction, content coverage and feeling of accomplishment (143:140-45).

In addition, Berelson and Steiner report that "the larger the group becomes...the more impersonal it tends to become, the more formalized, the less intimate, the less satisfying to the members (24:63)." A host of other writers in the fields of education and mental health have experienced success using the following group sizes: three to six (93:9); four to six (54:13, 112:288); four to seven (162:618); five to six (81:193, 119:183, 158:346), and six (48:582). From these findings, the author concluded that a group consisting of five to six members would seem to be ideal when working with primary school children.

D. Age Range of Group Members

Another stellar element which can govern the degree of success or failure experienced by a counseling group is the age range of the assembly's membership. Several authors, after careful deliberation, have proposed age spans which they feel will not constrict the group's viability. Driver (70:288), Patterson (163:618), Slavson (186:295), and Van Hoose (209:59) agree that latency-stage children can successfully interact in a group whose member's ages differ by only two years. Slavson (186:295), however, goes on to add that a six-month age span should determine membership selection in a pre-school group. Bennett, closely in accord with the previous authors, announces that an age differential of one and one-half to two years should be satisfactory in a childrne's counseling assemblage. However, in opposition to the preceding guidelines, Ginott would restrict the age variability in children's groups to but one year.

Upon pursuance of the antecedent issue, the author found that Foulkes (81) and Redl (169) were inclined to concentrate their attentions on the developmental stage of group members rather than their age as a criterion for group formulation. Redl succinctly articulates his beliefs by pronouncing that all members of a counseling group should be experiencing the same maturational stage. Dr. Redl believes maturational congruence to be a necessity if all members are to command similar advantages in a program concerned with their: adult relationships; interests in sex; ability to verbalize; and their security needs (169:246-47). Based upon this information, it would seem wise to gauge group membership assignments on more than mere chronological similarities.

E. Sex Composition of the Group

Should a group's membership be unisexual or bisexual in make-up? This question, as have others pertaining to group composition, is contingent upon the age of the clients. Ginott (92:35) and Ohlsen (150:346) believe that all group participants should be of the same sex during the latency period. Churchil (48:582), in her experiments with diagnostic groups, finds that assemblages whose members are of the same sex tend to be more functional and productive. These writers, as well as other experts, emphasize that during latency children strive to gain sexual identity and mixed groups might retard rather than encourage this crucial process. Moreover, it should be remembered that girls, on the average, developmentally surpass the boys and this could implicitly introduce too wide a divergence in the topics discussed during the meetings. Consequently, when dealing with primary school children, groups comprised of either exclusively male or female members would seem to possess more distinct advantages.

F. Length of Group Sessions

Another variable, which must be considered when conducting group counseling sessions, concerns the duration of group meetings. Foulkes (81:193) and Jensen (112:288) agree that one hour should be allotted for each session. Other time segments recommended for group sessions include: thirty minutes (205:15); thirty to forty minutes (81:193); thirty-five to forty-five minutes (54:13, 149:15); and ninety minutes (163:618). Although the length of group meetings may modulate because of such influences as group maturity, it is imperative that some type of time limit be established for each group. Moustakas (149:59) notes that "limits bind the relationship and tie it to reality." Hence, the counselor must initially communicate to the children that their time with him is defined by a closely maintained limit. It cannot be too forcefully stated that consistency in compliance with this element of reality is essential.

C. Duration of the Group as a Unit

Another essential limit which must be defined by the leader is a chronological point of group termination. This feature will, of course, vary according to the goals and nature of each group; but once again such a limit is a necessity. It is unrealistic for any group member to cling to the belief that his group, regardless of its cohesiveness, can exist intact forever. Hence, the group leader must arbitrarily assign a definite date of closure so that all members will be free to adequately prepare for that eventuality. This will provide members who are possibly threatened by the impending dissolution with time to verbalize their fears during the final group sessions. In addition, other members will be forced to take cognizance of the fact that there is only a set amount of time for them to derive desirable benefits by interacting with their fellow participants.

H. Physical Setting for Group Meetings

The physical environment of a group counseling session is a factor whose importance waxes inversely with the age of the counselees. Combs, et al. (54:13), remark that a counseling room should be: plainly decorated; small enough so that individuals cannot completely extricate themselves from the proceedings; and commodious enough to permit sufficient freedom of movement on the part of the children. The question of whether activity materials should be provided for the children depends wholly upon the age of the participants, the nature of the group and the philosophy of the leader. Foulkes and Anthony (81:191) believe that play materials should be provided for kindergarten students, but go on to add that latency children should meet in a bare room containing only a table and chairs (81:209). Conversely, Dell Lebo (127:236), in concurrence with a host of experts, has determined the use of play to be beneficial for children between the ages four and ten. Thus, counselors must acknowledge the age of their counselees prior to deciding upon the room size and the materials to be used in group counseling.

I. Qualifications and Role of the Group Leader

The final group-formation variables to be analyzed concerns the qualifications and the role of the group leader. These issues have been discussed by many scholars and the author will initially attempt to summarize some of the more notable counselor qualifications. Virginia H. Hewer (103:251) has written that

> little is known about the selection of group counselors, but the choice of a sensitive person who is aware of the interpersonal relations existing in the group and personal problems of members appeared to be a minimum requirement.

From Hewer's remarks it seems basic that a group leader be capable of both acceptant and observant behavior within the group situation (166:177). Glanz elaborates on the former by relating that the "... accepting, understanding climate of a democratic leader provides an almost theoretically perfect situation for learning (97:122)."

Cohn, et al. (52:357), while recognizing the significance of counselor acceptance, adds that a leader must also be a secure individual who commands a thorough understanding of himself. It has been found that a counselor who is self-assured and accepting is more capable of maintaining a consistent, respectful (149:2) attitude when dealing with children and thus, ultimately, increases the productivity of the group counseling atmosphere.

When evaluating counselor qualifications, it is easy to implicitly depreciate the importance of training and education by stressing the proclivities inherent in a successful leader. Nevertheless, such writers as Goldman (96:522), Hobbs (106:171), Jensen (112:290), and Bennett (22:220) clearly pronounce that counselors must have additional training to effectively work with groups of children. Konopka, in an article published nearly twenty years ago, lists six essential skills that a therapist needs when working with groups. These abilities, which apply with equal facility to the counselor, are not likely to be competently refined without sufficient training and experience. The skills mentioned are:

1. Understanding the dynamics of individual behavior, both normal and sick;
2. Understanding the dynamics of group processes;
3. Skill in relating to individuals in a face-to-face relationship;
4. Skill in relating to a group;
5. Ability to use the interview as a therapeutic tool; and
6. Ability to use play materials and other activities as therapeutic tools (121:57-58).

Upon scrutinizing the above qualifications, it is easy to see why some of the most notable failures in group counseling have occured in school situations (96:518). Expecting the average counselor to achieve success in counseling groups after having completed only one course in group guidance seems ludicrous, at best.

In discussing the leadership role during group counseling sessions, the author is essentially attempting to depict the manner in which a counselor utilizes his inherent and acquired qualifications within the group milieu. Although no two counselors adhere to exactly the same leadership role, Bennett (22:220) lists three approach styles which she feels predominate: a type of didactic or teacher-oriented approach; an approach where the counselor acts as a "... catalyst in a permissive non-directive setting;" and one which combines the first two approaches. In nearly all of the literature suvveyed, the second approach appeared to be most preferred by counselors and therapists working with children. In subsequent paragraphs, the author shall attempt to more clearly delineate a leadership posture for counselors functioning in a permissive, non-directive, group counseling environment.

The first aspect of a counselor's role to be examined deals with the practice of limit setting within the group. Nearly all of the writers surveyed (11, 80, 92, 149, 183, 204, 207) extolled the virtues of employing some type of limits when counseling groups of children. The limits recommended were simple, realistic, and were usually initiated to insure the health of the participants and the physical integrity of the counseling room. Another limit often included was a strict rule forbidding a child to leave the counseling room until the session was ended. When this tenent was violated, the day's counseling session was automatically terminated for the child involved. To assist the leader in the task of setting realistic group limitations, Ginott volunteers a complete and concise rational which includes the following guidelines.

1. Limits direct catharsis into symbolic channels such as painting, modeling and discussion.
2. Limits enable the therapist to maintain attitudes of acceptance, empathy, and regard for the child throughout therapy contacts.
3. Limits assure the physical safety of the children and the therapist in the room.
4. Limits strengthen ego controls by allowing the child to experience all of his feelings, but limiting some of the acting-out phases.
5. Some limits are set for reasons of law, ethics and social acceptability.
6. Some limits are set because of budgetary considerations (92:105-05).

Although this outline for limit setting was originally intended for use in play therapy, a counselor who is leading play groups within a school setting, might also find it useful as a rationale for establishing group limits.

Another factor pertaining to the counselor's role, involves the depth of participation by the leader in the group process. Such scholars as Hobbs (106:174), Young, et al. (217:823), Kinnick (117:35), Peres (164:160), Warters (207:222), and Baruch (20:272) forcefully assert that the counselor's role must include the task of helping to create a friendly group atmosphere conducive to the establishment of group cohesiveness. Yet, it is significant to recall that when dealing with younger children who function moderately well in a "... patriarchal- or matriarchal sovereign... (169:86)" group resembling a family unit (131:718), the leader's participation must be restricted to "facilitative" rather than "directive" actions (207:224). Moreover, it should also be remembered that a counselor's influence is usually intensified by the increased incidence of countertransference responses in group situations (81:190). Thus, it is of paramount importance that a counselor remain cognizant of his own potential for group influence when working with young children.

It is generally recognized that if the leader elects to involve himself in group activities, he should do so in a generally passive manner (72:592, 81:193, 111:56). Clearly, some structure (83:245, 113:82, 149:14) is desirable at times, but the counselor must respect the participants (149:2), by supporting and encouraging their entry into the dialogue, instead of retarding the therapeutic process (92:91) by attempting to dominate them (207:200). Van Fleet believes that the group leader should "... be firm and positive, yet permissive and friendly (204:80)." Also, the group leader should neither sanction nor condemn anti-social actions exercised in the group (92:85). Hopefully, by maintaining an atmosphere that is neutral, nonjudgemental, and free from physical attack (11:133), the group will provide members with the security needed to experiment with personality change (11:122) and the exploration of their own worlds (92:85).

The author has attempted to emphasize that the counselor does indeed have the potential to foster a productive group climate. He can direct the group's output, either actively or passively, by: determining the materials to be used (183:49); selecting the group members; knowing the nuclear problem of each participant (183:98); articulating the purpose of the group at the initial session; participating either passively or actively in the group processes; and being a sensitive and perceptive human being (72:592). Consequently, the group counselor is in possession of not only great power, but also profound responsibilities. Whatever happens to the group will depend largely on him, for as Durkin (72:594) has so concisely stated, "the problems that come up during the course of group therapy can, like most others, be traced down to the therapist himself."

VII. Outcomes and Benefits Attained From Group Counseling and Group Therapy

A. All Goals Should Be Realistic

The final aspect of group research to be discussed concerns positive outcomes and benefits attainable through small-group counseling and therapy. Before any counselor attempts to pursue a program incorporating group counseling, it is vital that his aspirations regarding group success reside in a reasonably attainable range. Group counseling is certainly no panacea for educational deficits, but it has evidenced promise when conducted in a controlled and professional fashion. Perhaps the ensuing paragraphs will serve to assist those elementary counselors, who are struggling to identify reachable goals, by enumerating realistic outcomes to be expected from successful small-group interaction.

Gordon Allport (1:32) has written that acceptance by an "affectionate environment" can help an individual gain self-acceptance, "... to tolerate the ways of the world, and to handle the conflicts of later life in a mature manner." Moreover, Allport's assertions seem to have been supported by Dorothy Baruch's research in the area of group therapy. Baruch (20:274) found that pursuant to group therapy experiences, the participants realized: an increased ability to confront problems; "a sense of increased ease and reduction in guilt, hostility and in feeling of being different;" an increased capability for understanding others; and an augmented "... emotional capacity and expressiveness."

Additional writers have also advanced views on anticipated outcomes from counseling or therapy groups. Scheidlinger (177:234) reported that the overall group-therapy experience can result in the alteration of one's ego structure. Through interaction with peers and the group leader, a child can negotiate a "... transition toward a more balanced and realistic perception of adults, the world and its demands." Scheidlinger also noted that the presence of "social hunger" could ultimately persuade a participant to accept "... traditions and mores and adjust his behavior in accordance with group values."

B. Goals Can be Achieved Through Individual Changes

From the literature, it is evident that the expectations of group therapy and group counseling are to be achieved through personal changes rather than solving definite problems (164:172). By focusing on developing one's frustration tolerance (186:288) and the adoption of less defeating behavior (166:165), a group might conceivably prevent its members from encountering many future difficulties (22:171). The author has discovered that within each wisely regulated group counseling or group therapy milieu lie the ingredients necessary to help an individual achieve a more sensitive, tolerant, and mature style of life. Group counseling thus provides the school counselor with a preventative guidance approach capable of supplying benefits to nearly every member of the "normal" population.

VIII. A Proposed Program of Group Counseling in the Early Primary Grades

A. Statement of the Problem

The final objective to be attempted in this paper will be to outline and propose a group counseling program for purposes of improving human relations and social adjustments among students during the early primary grades. The author, after carefully surveying the literature, believes a project of this nature to be a practical and efficient use of the elementary counselor's time. Furthermore, when working in unison with elementary teachers, students displaying behavioral and adjustment difficulties can be identified and assisted before the problems become unwieldy. Child development research findings inform us of the vital role that an individual's early years play in insuring healthy development. Group counseling, employed at the proper time, has proven its effectiveness in helping, among others: students who have difficulty making friends; students who have difficulty asserting themselves in their schoolwork; students who underachieve (158:344); students who are immature; and students with habit and conduct disorders (92:17).

B. Design of the Program

This program is designed to include fifteen University of Chicago Laboratory School students in three experimental groups. These first and second graders shall be assigned to one of three small counseling groups, each consisting of five members, where selected play materials will be utilized. The groups will meet for fourteen weekly sessions of forty-five minutes duration. A control group of fifteen students will also be identified for comparison purposes, but will receive no special treatment during the fourteen week study.

C. Procedure

James R. Barclay has observed that a central problem of the elementary school counselor "... is to determine who is in need of special help in the learning process (18:1067)." Recognizing this problem, the author believes that one effective method of determining which students might benefit from additional assistance in negotiating school and social adjustments is the sociogram. Through sociometric devices, a "measure of peer evaluation" is obtained for the entire class population (18:1071). Commanding the results of such a measure, it would be simple for a counselor to perceive how each student ranked in the classroom social hierarchy. An assessment of this nature is of importance, because the more facilitating or threatening peer relations become, "... the more probability they have of affecting the pupil's adjustment to formalized learning and conduct commands of the school culture (178:166)." Barclay also notes that:

> children tend to develop a behavioral repertory related to social learning which remains relatively constant and impervious to change without some kind of behavioral intervention (18:1072).

In the proposed program, the intervention would be through counseling groups formed after the process of identifying likely group candidates was completed.

The sociometric instrument utilized in this program will be administered by the counselor and is to consist of the following questions.

1. When you have a lot of work to do during school, which two children would you most like to sit next to and work with?

2. Of all the children in your room, tell me which two you most like to play with during school?

3. Which two children in your classroom would you most like to have on your team during physical education?

4. Which two children in this classroom would you most like to invite to your home?

5. Of all the children in this room, which two do you most like to be with during the day?

6. During lunch, which two students in your room would you most like to eat with?

The preceding six questions were selected in order to obtain a general impression of the existing social structure operating daily within the classroom. Each student will be questioned on a one-to-one basis in order to mitigate the overt and covert social pressures which would be present in a group situation. The replies garnered from the questions will be compiled and diagramed in order to depict the social position of each member of the classroom. The results will subsequently be used to aid the counselor in assigning pupils to counseling groups.

Another research method to be used in the program will be teacher ratings of students. All first and second grade teachers who have students involved in either the research or control groups will be requested to complete six questions pertaining to each participant in accordance with a seven point rating scale. The teachers will be asked to ascertain a student's conduct in reference to a scale which ranks the child's actions on a seven point scale ranging from behavior adjudged to be least like him to behavior deemed to be most like him (i.e., Least Like Him -1-2-3-4-5-6-7-Most Like Him). Listed below are the six questions to which the instructors will be expected to respond.

1. This child seeks to gain attention from his peers through acting-out behavior.

2. This child tends to withdraw from social contacts with his classmates.

3. This child seeks to gain the attention of his teacher in lieu of his peer's approval.

4. This child is usually rejected by others in his room in almost every situation.

5. This child has difficulty concentrating on his own work and seems preoccupied with the actions of his peers.

6. This child does not seem to be working up to his academic potential.

A student's rating position on each question will then be totaled after all questions have been completed. The total number will yield a student's social adjustment score. Children with high scores will manifest adjustment difficulties. Those who garner low totals, according to teacher ratings, suffer from few social adjustment burdens.

Both the sociogram and the teacher rating scale are to be administered during the sixth week of school. At this point in the fall term, a teacher should be able to accurately rate the students, because the classroom social system should be fairly well established. The experimental groups will then be formed and will meet for their first of fourteen sessions. Three weeks following the final group meeting, the sociogram and teacher rating scale will be readministered for follow-up purposes. The author will then compare and contrast the differences in social standings and teacher ratings for both experimental and control groups between the two dates of instrument administration.

Each experimental group involved in this program shall consist of: one participant who is considered to be moderately aggressive; two members who are adjudged to be withdrawn and passive; and two members who are experiencing no acute adjustment difficulties. The control groups will also consist of a similar group pattern. From the literature, much evidence was found to support this type of heterogeneous groupings (15:293, 72:596, 92:32, 106:177-78). The author intends that the two pupils without salient difficulties will serve as behavioral models for the others. Also, by limiting the number of acting-out participants to one the group stands a better chance of realizing success without falling prey to internal dissolution.

There is some dispute over whether counseling groups should consist of members who are strangers or people who often interact with each other outside of the group environment. Regardless of one's position on this question, the counselor will frequently have little choice in resolving this issue. In most primary school situations, a great number of the children have at least a nodding acquaintanceship with every student in the school. However, by employing a two year range in the ages of group members, an increased population of children will be available for group selection. This will tend to somewhat minimize the degree of social interaction outside of the group setting.

The group environment for this program will consist of a counseling office containing the following play materials: modeling clay; toy soldiers; crayons and drawing paper; a chalk board; rubber balls; nursing bottles; male and female dolls; a doll house, including furniture and a doll family; toy cars, airplanes and boats; building blocks; Tinker Toys; board games; paper for cutting; pipe cleaners; and a typewriter. The school is, unfortunately, not equipped with a play room, but, according to Axline (11), such a convenience is not a dire necessity.

During the initial group meeting, the participants will be informed as to the purpose of the group and why they have been selected as members. At this time the following list of limitations will also be pronounced: the time limit; the rule that no member can leave the room and be readmitted during the same session; the rule prohibiting objects from being hurled at the windows; and the number of sessions the group will meet as an organized entity. As other exigencies arise, additional limits will be discussed and put into effect.

Finally, the author will verbally participate in the group situation in a quite comprehensive manner. However, the leader will remain physically passive and will enter into group activities only upon request. The author desires to set a tone of freedom and acceptance in the group milieu which is conducive to experimentation and participation. Nevertheless, it is the ultimate goal of the writer to forever keep the relationship grounded in reality. It is extremely difficult for a child to make the radical transition from an ambiguous and intimate group setting to the clearly defined limits and expectations of an academic setting and vice versa.

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